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ABSTRACT

The relationship between teacher and supervisor can be compared to that of husband and wife. Both relationships require care, commitment, communication, respect, truthfulness, and trust. Certain characteristics must exist between the supervisor and teacher for the process to be successful and, ultimately, lead to improved instruction. This paper examines 20 such characteristics that are apparent in both the clinical supervision process and marriage. The paper also compares the stages of clinical supervision with the life of a marriage. They are the pre-observation conference, observation stage, analysis and strategy stage, post-observation conference, and post-conference analysis. One overwhelming concept discovered is that trust is the basis for all relationships, and truthfulness is the key to developing trust. Communication is the vehicle for maintaining and developing the relationship. If teachers and supervisors understood their relationship as one typical of a husband and wife, education as the "offspring" of this relationship, would profit beyond expectation. (Contains 12 references.) (Author/LH)

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Running Head: Clinical Supervision Marriage

Clinical Supervision Marriage: A Matrimonial Metaphor for Understanding the Supervisor-Teacher Relationship

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Abstract

Marriage is an institution and process that hinges upon the quality of the relationship between the husband and wife. It is undisputed that if the relationship does not include characteristics such as care, commitment, communication, respect, truthfulness, and trust, the two people will cease to grow. The same is true in clinical supervision. Certain characteristics must exist between the supervisor and teacher for the process to be successful and, ultimately, lead to improved instruction. This paper examines 20 such characteristics that are apparent within the clinical supervision process and marriage, as well as comparing the stages of clinical supervision with the "life" of marriage.

The clinical supervision cycle is a process that absolutely relies on a positive relationship between the supervisor and teacher. It is not sufficient enough that rudimentary respect and compliance exist. There are many other characteristics that are essential for success. When reviewing the research and studying this relationship more closely, an interesting comparison can be drawn between a supervisor and teacher and a husband and wife. For example, there is a necessity for trust, respect, communication, cooperation, and understanding, all of which are critical qualities of both types of relationships. Oftentimes, developing an adequate understanding of the relationship between a supervisor and teacher is somewhat difficult. Interestingly, if written descriptions of the supervisory process were not replete with recurrent educational jargon, one might think that they were reading detailed explications on how to have a good marriage.

After I became aware of the similarities, I began to look deeper into the clinical supervision cycle to see if I could observe an illustration of matrimony. To my amazement, I realized that the cycle envisioned by Cogan and revised by Goldhammer is indicative of a life leading up to and living out marriage (Glatthorn, 1990). For example, the pre-observation conference is symbolic of the courting maneuvers prior to marriage. The initial classroom observations simulate the actual ceremony and newlywed year. The analysis of data and strategy

stage is the three to five year period after the newlywed year. The post-observation conference is indicative of the actual communication that takes place in a marriage. Lastly, the post-conference analysis is the mid-life evaluation that many wedded individuals encounter approximately 10 to 20 years into marriage. Most of this concerning the common characteristics between the two relationships, and the clinical supervision cycle versus married life, is conveyed in an amusing manner.

Characteristics of Relationships

I would like to begin this study of clinical supervision with a comparison of the characteristics that exist within the supervisor and teacher relationship and the characteristics that exist within the husband and wife relationship. I pulled out 20 actual characteristics from clinical supervision research (e.g., Anderson & Snyder, 1993, Glatthorn, 1990, Goldhammer et al., 1990, Nolan et al., 1993, Smyth, 1985, Tracy & MacNaughton, 1993.) that have a tendency to mirror what one would expect out of marriage research. In alphabetical order, they are as follows:

* Autonomy * Care * Collaboration * Commitment
* Communication * Deference * Equality * Humility
* Prioritize * Reciprocity * Reflection * Respect
* Responsibility * Sensitivity * Support * Time
* Trust * Truthfulness * Understanding * Vulnerability

My objective is to discuss the relevance of these characteristics in clinical supervision and marriage, but I will be placing more emphasis on the former rather than the latter.

Autonomy refers to a person's ability to be free and act independently. When two people enter into a marriage they give up a tremendous amount of autonomy in their lives. No longer do they act and think as two separate individuals. Their existence is now based on working together as one, with a common family vision. Thus, a loss of autonomy is apparent. On the other hand, a husband and wife must still possess a sense independence and autonomy in order to keep their self-image from being diminished. The same sense of autonomy exists in clinical supervision. A school is an institution within itself, much like marriage. The school exists as one entity with a common vision of excellence in the education of young people. This common vision is often handed down by the powers that be (administration and school board), along with the "modus operandi" utilized to carry out that common vision. This bureaucratic entanglement often stifles autonomy, thus damaging the self-image of teachers and students. According to Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewski (1993), enhancing a teacher's sense of professional autonomy is essential for the success of clinical supervision. Teachers must feel respected for who they are and what they do in order to accept a supervisor's assistance. A supervisor must not take the opportunity to control teachers and push them around within the clinical supervision process. On the contrary, supervisors must liberate teachers and help them gain control over their

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professional lives while simultaneously developing a close professional relationship with them (Smyth, 1985).

Care is essential to the relationship between a husband and wife. Two people are obviously to be concerned about one another and take actions accordingly both prior to and during a marriage. Clinical supervision also requires care, specifically from the supervisor. The supervisor should care about teachers, students, learning, and their own position. When care is fostered, growth can occur, and growth is what clinical supervision is about (Anderson & Snyder, 1993). Teachers are given the opportunity to grow with the help of their supervisor, which ultimately promotes excellence in education through improved student learning.

Collaboration is the process of working together with another person or group. A husband and wife should work together on a daily basis, especially if they have children. As was stated previously, when two people marry they posses a common family vision, whether it is stated or not. The two work together in order to have a positive and healthy relationship. Collaboration also exists within clinical supervision. A case study by Peter Grimmett and Patricia Creehan concluded that for teachers to engage in clinical supervision, teachers must be allowed to name the problems to address and then explore those problems collaboratively with their supervisor (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). The two will then work together to generate goals that will remedy indicated problems.

Commitment is something that a couple develops prior to marriage. A commitment between two people tells one another that they are bound together for a certain purpose. Within clinical supervision, commitment is also a must. If the process is to be successful, commitment by the parties involved needs to be apparent (Anderson & Snyder, 1993). In fact, there will be no major changes in teacher behavior and thinking if commitment is not a part of the cycle (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993).

Deference refers to the actions that tell a person that they are not a threat to another person's competence or self-image (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). In the husband and wife relationship, the husband or wife should not be a threat to the competence or self-image of their spouse. The two have an obligation to build one another up. In fact, they may often defer to one another by lifting each other higher than themselves. A supervisor is to do that with teachers. Supervisors are not to be a threat to the professional competence or self-image of the teacher, yet they are to be a safe haven. The supervisor's counsel should be a vehicle by which improvement is fostered. Improvement primarily exists after inadequacies are exposed. As a result, teachers should be free to share their perceived inadequacies without being subject to shame, fear, or embarrassment.

Equality is an aspect that the United States of America was founded upon, even though it may not always adhere to. Within a

husband and wife relationship, equality of efforts is essential. A couple must feel that both sides are putting the same amount into the relationship. When the scale gets lopsided in one direction or another, problems can arise. This same sense of equality exists in the relationship between a supervisor and teacher. In six different clinical supervision case studies performed by Nolan, Hawkes, and Francis (1993), it was unanimously concluded that equality of efforts must be clear. Both parties must put the same amount into the process. In turn, this will accentuate collegiality, collaboration, support, and trust, which are vital to the success of clinical supervision.

Humility is the act of not valuing oneself over other individuals. The opposite of humility is pride. In a husband and wife relationship, each individual must foster humility by uplifting one another. In the clinical supervision cycle, the same quality exists. When tasks get complex and beyond one's own understanding, the supervisor and teacher should still work together as a unit (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). One particular side cannot begin to exhibit total superiority. A sense of humility must prevail in order to foster shared decision making.

Prioritizing is an important factor in every marriage. Two people must make time to work on the relationship at hand. The same dynamic exists in clinical supervision. The supervisor and teacher must make their relationship and the cycle a priority,

and set goals to advance and improve instruction (Gordon, 1992). If two people do not make their relationship a priority and agree upon things to accomplish within that relationship, then there will surely be other encumbrances that will take precedence over what was intended to be valued.

Reciprocity describes the mutual "give and take" that goes on in relationships. Two people who are joined in marriage understand this and nurture one another through the "give and take" process. The collegiality that should exist between a supervisor and teacher is also a product of reciprocity. This reciprocity describes the equality of efforts, sense of humility, and mutual vulnerability that is necessary for the success of the relationship (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). When reciprocity is in place, the supervisor and teacher may achieve an openness that enables them to work directly with problems in order to improve instruction.

Reflection is a natural process for a husband and wife. Issues of the past are often reviewed in conversation with one another and quiet time alone. This can be positive or negative, depending on the attitude in which the process is approached. The bottom line is that corrections are made and improvements prevail. The same is true of a supervisor and teacher. Garman and Haggerson note that reflection "means inquiring about our roles and our strategies and guessing what might work better, trying out hunches, inquiring about what we have done, doing it

again" (Anderson & Snyder, 1993, p. 44). This definition does a fine job in explaining reflection and eludes to the benefits of using it within the supervisor and teacher relationship.

Respect is a quality every person desires. We all look and long for this quality in all of our relationships. A husband and wife must have mutual respect for one another in order to have a nurturing relationship. If the husband or wife loses respect in any way, that partner will no longer value the other, and ultimately may bring dishonor to the other. Likewise, the supervisor and teacher should have respect for the clinical supervision process and themselves in order to accept the exchange of ideas (Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1993). Respect fosters the teacher-supervisor relationship. Both parties will degrade the process and impede growth if they do not have and show respect.

Responsibility is a quality that a husband and wife cannot do without. Each person must take responsibility for facilitating the improvement of the marriage and initiating actions to ensure success. If both parties develop an attitude of leaving it up to one another, then the relationship will eventually falter. Swarzman states that "If every event has a learned lesson, then by taking responsibility one is forced to examine how to improve for the next time" (cited in Anderson & Snyder, 1993, p. 125). Measurable results are the goal of the clinical supervision process. If those results are to be

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achieved, the supervisor and teacher must take actions to accomplish them.

Sensitivity to one another's thoughts and emotions keep a husband and wife bonded together. If this sensitivity is lost, the relationship is lost. Sergiovanni (1986) echoes this need for sensitivity in his writings on clinical supervision. He notes that empathy is critical to implementing clinical supervision, and "each person involved needs to be consciously sensitive to the preconceptions, intentions, and motives of others" (p. 49).

Support is a given in a relationship between a husband and wife. Each is required to support one another physically and emotionally. A husband and wife's relationship personifies support in many ways. A supervisor and teacher's relationship, within the clinical supervision process, is also designed to embody support. Support makes the cycle run smoothly and initiates many other qualities, like reflection and collaboration (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). Support is a quality that builds security into a relationship and that eventually evolves into trust.

It is often said that people value those things they invest their time in. For example, a person's daily planner may often reveal what that person values. A husband and wife must spend quality time together in order to show each other that they value the relationship. The supervisor and teacher must also spend

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time in clinical supervision to show that it is a valued part of improved instruction (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). Meeting hurriedly in the hall or merely talking over lunch is not necessarily quality time. Blocks of time must be set aside and each person must be shown that the process is important.

Trust is the foundation of all relationships. No relationship, especially the relationship between husband and wife, will grow without trust being firmly established. The supervisor-teacher relationship is no exception: "The development of trust between the teacher and supervisor is an absolute precedent to the practice of clinical supervision" (Reilkoff, 1981, p. 29). The supervisor and teacher must begin their relationship, and the clinical supervision process, by building trust. Good things will come out of a relationship built on trust.

Truthfulness and trust go hand-in-hand. One quality does not exist without the other. For trust to be built, Sergiovanni (1986) writes that truthfulness must come first. What is supposed to be true in the clinical supervision process must reflect reality: "No matter how carefully the supervisor builds a case, truth and fact cannot be separated from the meanings and realities of each of the participants involved in this allegory" (Sergiovanni, 1986, p. 40). From the beginning of the relationship, during the observation data analysis, and

throughout the assessment of the supervision cycle, truthfulness must prevail.

Understanding is a quality that is developed in a relationship over time. A husband and wife develop an understanding of one another after they have spent time communicating and working on their relationship. In relation to the supervisor and teacher, both parties "must have sufficient mutual understanding of each other and of the work context. If they do, little energy is wasted on interpersonal decoding" (Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1993, p. 65). The "interpersonal decoding" is an area of much concern. If understanding through communication does not exist, instructional improvement will not occur (Tracy & MacNaughton, 1993).

The final characteristic that will be discussed is vulnerability. Vulnerability was briefly mentioned earlier in relation to reciprocity. The husband and wife must bear their life and become vulnerable if they are to grow close and relate to one another. The supervisor and teacher must do this within their relationship as well. As noted by Nolan et al. (1993), "The teacher is vulnerable as one whose practice is laid open to examination, and unlike traditional forms of supervision, the supervisor is also vulnerable" (p. 55). The act of becoming vulnerable is difficult in the beginning, but becomes easier when trust is built. Vulnerability is similar to truthfulness, and is

extremely important if the supervisor and teacher are going to get to the heart of instructional issues.

Clinical Supervision and the Life of a Marriage

The next section of this paper concerns the clinical supervision cycle and how it relates to the "life" of a marriage. The first stage of clinical supervision includes the pre-observation conference. The happenings in this stage can be compared to courting or pre-marriage preparations. The initial pre-observation conference, like courtship, is a time of developing, confirming, and nurturing the relationship between a supervisor and teacher (Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1993). Needs and concerns are discussed and the two parties become very well acquainted in their profession. The two may meet on several occasions prior to the observation in order to understand the process and to make sure that both parties are committed (Nolan, Hawkes, & Francis, 1993). During these meetings, goals and strategies are discussed concerning the forthcoming observation (Pool & Evans, 1991). Communication, confidence, respect, security, and, ultimately, trust are built during this stage. The foundation is laid during this time and an eventual verbal contract (i.e., an "engagement") is set regarding what will specifically take place during the observation (Gordon, 1992).

Courting is the time where love for one another is confirmed and nurturing takes place. It is a time when two people discuss their own needs and concerns and eventually come to a mutual

understanding of each other and agree to bond in marriage. It is a time when goals are discussed and a couple ascertains a common vision. Once all of this takes place, the courting reaches its climax and an eventual verbal contract is made, which is identical to the fulfillment of the pre-observation stage.

The groundwork has been laid, a verbal contract is set, and it is now time for the actual observation. During this time, the plans made in the pre-observation conference are carried out (Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1993). The teacher performs a lesson and the supervisor collects data. Data are collected by the supervisor for an eventual analysis and strategy session. The supervisor must always remain objective and blend in with the classroom setting (Gordon, 1992).

The observation stage is indicative of the actual marriage ceremony and subsequent newlywed year. There is much observation taking place during the marriage ceremony, and all participants are on their best behavior. There may, however, be a couple of "bad apples" who show up at the wedding. Most families have one or two, just like most classrooms do. The newlywed year is also a time of observation. The perceptions and plans set prior to marriage are now judged when the spotlight is on and the couple observes one another in life. At this point, there is no place to hide. A couple has now entered the classroom of life, and there performance will account for the preciseness of courtship.

The analysis of the observation data and strategy stage follows the observation. The purpose of this stage, as determined by Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski (1993), is to reconstruct, sort, and relate the events of the observation to the pre-determined objectives set in the initial stage. The supervisor reflects upon and analyzes data in order to plan a strategy for the post-observation conference. The supervisor looks ahead for possibilities of future growth and development, and reserves all judgments until further review and discussion of the data. The primary objective is to settle on a strategy for the conference and decide how to facilitate change through communication.

The analysis and strategy stage is similar to the three to five year period after a couple's newlywed year. This is a time where much reflection takes place over what has transpired during the marriage. Issues arise and couples generally come to the point of assessing their relationship in terms of prior expectations. Reflection and assessment occur on a continual basis throughout this period and a dominant assessment strategy will eventually prevail. When both parties reach this point and come to terms with the issues, communication will increase in hopes of coming to an operative resolution.

The post-observation conference is the fourth stage in the clinical supervision cycle where communication reaches its peak. "Effective supervisor communication skills are necessary during

this stage if meaningful instructional improvement is to occur" (Anderson & Snyder, 1993, p. 110). The issues that have become apparent to deal with are confirmed during this stage, and the appropriate techniques are developed to assist improvement (Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1993). The relationship between the supervisor and teacher gets stronger during this stage as a result of the parties working through the problems and strategies of instruction. Mutual trust and respect increase as commitment is expressed through the time spent in the process of clinical supervision.

The post-observation conference is representative of the communication that goes on between a husband and wife, especially when faced with questions. In the clinical supervision literature, the importance of communication is frequently expressed. For example, Swarzman writes on the importance of "people-to-people" communication by stating, "Sending messages through this well-established line of communication has meant the success or downfall of marriages..." (Anderson & Snyder, 1993, p. 113). Communication in marriage takes work, compromise, understanding, honesty, openness, confidentiality, responsiveness, and an ability to not jump to conclusions (McDowell, 1985). All of these qualities have been mentioned concerning the supervisor and teacher relationship. Another major aspect of communication is listening (Barnes & Barnes, 1988). Most people have not learned to listen, but it is

essential if communication is to be beneficial. Working through the issues of instruction is no different than the issues of marriage. The parties involved must be able to collaborate and come up with strategies for improvement, and communicate those strategies in an effective manner.

The final stage in the clinical supervision cycle is the post-conference analysis. This is the time where the events of the cycle are reconstructed (Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1993). The supervisor and teacher assess their involvement and decide whether or not corrections need to be made on subsequent cycles. Both parties estimate the value of the cycle and determine how it served instruction. This stage is probably the first time that the participants focus entirely on "self" in relation to the cycle. The stage is often referred to "post-conference self-analysis" (Gordon, 1992, p. 47). The focus is on taking responsibility for one's own actions and moving toward self-supervision. This may not ever be achieved, but it is still the primary goal of clinical supervision (Gordon, 1992).

Oftentimes, couples tend to go through a sort of self-analysis stage approximately 10 to 20 years into marriage. (This assumption is based on entering matrimony at the age of 20 to 30.) Some people may call this a "mid-life crisis." Other people may not consider it a crisis at all, but a time of re-thinking their vision. Nonetheless, a husband and wife (supervisor and teacher) survey how their marriage (clinical

supervision cycle) has treated them. Have they accomplished the goals that they set when they were younger, together or individually? Are there any changes that need to be made in their goals or vision? How can they make sure that subsequent adventures in marriage (the supervisory process) are productive? What can they do to improve the quality of life (the instructional process) in years to come? It is all a part of the self-analysis process and the quest to improve future life experiences.

In conclusion, the relationship between a supervisor and teacher within clinical supervision has many common characteristics with the relationship between a husband and wife. One overwhelming concept that I discovered in making this comparison is that trust is the basis for all relationships. Furthermore, truthfulness is the key to developing trust, and communication is the vehicle to making a relationship happen. It would be helpful to supervisors and teachers if they grasped this concept, and ultimately viewed their relationship in the profession as one typical of a husband and wife. If this took place, and all of the qualities detailed in this paper where embraced by supervisors and teachers, the offspring of education would profit beyond belief.

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